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Media Release 254/2006

20 December 2006

COLE INQUIRY TASK FORCE ESTABLISHED

The Attorney-General, Philip Ruddock, today announced the establishment of the task force recommended by Commissioner Cole after the Oil-for-Food inquiry

The task force will include officers from the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and it is expected that Victoria Police will also join the operation. The Commonwealth and Victorian Directors of Public Prosecutions will provide advice.

"We have moved quickly to implement Commissioner Cole's recommendation and this demonstrates the Government's continued commitment to get to the bottom of this matter," Mr Ruddock said.

The task force will be managed by experienced Australian Federal Police officer Peter Donaldson. It will be based in Melbourne and start work early in 2007.

Mr Donaldson held senior executive positions with the APF as Director of Operations in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne until his retirement in 2002. Since 2002, he has conducted a review of South Pacific law enforcement services and has provided advice to the Victoria Office of Police Integrity on corruption prevention.

"Mr Donaldson's experience in serious fraud, corruption and organised crime investigations will be invaluable," Mr Ruddock said.

The Attorney-General welcomed the participation of Victorian agencies in the task force.

"Today's announcement shows the Government is moving quickly to deal with possible criminal behaviour identified by Mr Cole," Mr Ruddock said.

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Last Modified: Wednesday, 20 December 2006 Attorney-General

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